

Our willful neglect of our border security had galled our fellow citizens. As a political gesture, this Administration and this Congress want to build a wall and militarize the border? That's not what we need. We need to keep our promises to the American people and fund the promises we made.

We must send a clear message that when you cross our borders illegally, you will be caught and detained. I get our desperate fiscal situation. But compromising border security is not the way to trim the deficit.

At some point, this Congress must deal with the national security risks that remains with the very large number of OTMs released into the general population who are still unaccounted for. Funding the effort to locate all the released OTMs is going to make paying for the minimum number of agents and beds seem like child's play.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 3661. An act to amend section 29 of the International Air Transportation Competition Act of 1979 relating to air transportation to and from Love Field, Texas.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 5122, JOHN WARNER NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1062 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1062

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 5122) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield

the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and attach tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, today, the Rules Committee met and reported a special rule for consideration of H.R. 5122, the fiscal year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration and provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule for H.R. 5122 and the underlying legislation. Today, we are at a critical juncture. The conference report for the fiscal year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act is before us. This legislative companion to the fiscal year 2007 defense appropriations bill authorizes and provides critical legislative language for full implementation of our defense policies.

Let us be clear: This is an excellent piece of legislation, a good bipartisan package that represents the best work of the House Armed Services Committee. Recognizing that, I would like to personally thank both the gentleman from California, Chairman HUNTER, and the gentleman from Missouri, Ranking Member SKELTON, for delivering a package that I am sure almost all of us can support.

Mr. Speaker, having served on the House Armed Services Committee and currently being a member on leave of absence from that committee, I know how closely the members of that committee work together to achieve a bill that is bipartisan, that is good for our servicemen and women and that is good for increasing the security of our country.

Mr. Speaker, this year, the Armed Services Committee produced a bill that contains several major legislative initiatives and funding impacts. Among them are an additional \$70 billion in supplemental bridge funding to support the war on terror's operations costs; personnel expenses and procurement of new equipment; additional funding for force protection needs in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, including up-armored Humvees, Humvee IED protection kits and gunner protection kits, IED jammers and state-of-the-art body armor; a 2.2 percent pay raise for all members of our Armed Forces; and an increase of 30,000 personnel for the Army and 5,000 personnel

for the Marine Corps to help them sustain their required missions.

□ 1600

The bill blocks the Department of Defense proposed TRICARE Prime, Standard, and Select Reserve fee increases. The bill authorizes grants and loan guarantees to U.S. shipyards to approve their efficiency, cost effectiveness, and international competitiveness. The bill fully funds the immediate Army and Marine Corps shortfalls for replenishing supplies and replacing equipment in the amount of \$17.1 billion for the Army and \$5.7 billion for the Marines.

Mr. Speaker, more importantly this legislation directly supports our servicemen and -women in the field and on deployment. Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are dependent on us passing this legislation that contains so many changes in legislative language.

Mr. Speaker, a bumper sticker we often read says: "I support our troops." Today we have that opportunity and responsibility. We could support our troops and improve the security of our Nation in a way that other Americans cannot. We can offer our vote in support of this legislation as 60 of 61 members of the House Armed Services Committee did when they initially passed the bill.

This is not a controversial proposition. This is something we should be proud to do, regardless of our perspectives and different positions on the war in Iraq. All of us are proud of our troops. All of us are committed to them and commend them for their courage and their professionalism, and all of us will do everything we can to increase their safety and effectiveness.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not also note that the Afghan and the Iraqi people also deserve to be commended for their efforts in our common struggle. During this war, the citizens of both these countries have held elections, written constitutions, and formed permanent governments. Afghan and Iraqi citizens are watching what we do here today. They require and request our continued support as they move forward in their efforts to build new and better countries. The passage of this rule and underlying legislation is an important sign that this country and Congress will keep its commitments. Afghanistan and Iraq are striving to create a future of hope and promise. We can play an important role in helping them do that here today.

Mr. Speaker, many may wish to raise policy issues in this debate. Some may want to discuss issues that, however important, are superfluous to providing for the needs of our men and women in uniform. And I welcome that exchange, if indeed it occurs.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we should focus on what should count. We have committed hundreds of thousands of our service men and -women to fight terrorism and advance the cause of

freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. We owe them our full support in the battles they wage on behalf of the American people and the cause of liberty. This rule and the underlying bill represent the efforts of Congress to keep that solemn commitment to the sons and daughters of America. Mr. Speaker, to that end, I urge support for the rule and the underlying bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I might consume.

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, the rule before us makes in order a conference report for the fiscal year 2007 defense authorization bill. The underlying agreement has been a long time in the making, and I am happy to report that it is a clean agreement. I applaud the conferees for refraining from adding extraneous provisions. This bill is about our troops, and I appreciate the Members preserving that focus.

I am not unsympathetic to the desire of many Members in this Chamber to do more before we adjourn. As my colleagues and I have been urging all week, Congress should not leave town without allowing for floor debate on the American people's priorities. These include fully implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendations, allowing a clean vote to increase the minimum wage, and restoring the massive cuts in student financial aid passed by this Congress earlier this year. Despite being the waning hours of this Congress, there is still time to conduct the business of the American people. There is certainly time for debate and a vote on these other urgent priorities.

But to return to the rule we now debate, it allows for consideration of a bill of our national defense and it is a good agreement.

When H.R. 5122 was first considered by the House, I discussed that this bill serves two critical roles: first, as a planning blueprint in order to ensure that our military has the resources and tools to meet any threat from abroad; and, second, to provide for the men and women on the front line of our Nation's defense.

I am happy to report that the conferees kept both of these goals in mind in crafting this responsible agreement. It goes far in the support of the most professional and dedicated military in the world.

The agreement does not permit increases in the military's TRICARE prescription drug program, as the House version of this bill would have done. That is a very good thing. Our men and women in uniform should not pay more to access their benefits, particularly in a time of war.

Additionally, the agreement also maintains a critical role of our military chaplains and what they play in

the spiritual lives and health of our troops. In a time of war, we cannot afford to change the rules in ways which may degrade readiness and unit cohesion.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that conferees preserve the wisdom in the underlying bill, which preserved the troop strength of our National Guard. The tragedy of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the annual wildfires in my home State of California and other parts of the West, as well as many members of the Guard called to duty in Iraq, demonstrate the numerous demands placed on the Guard and the important role they play.

For all that we ask of them, these individuals, be they members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Reserves, or National Guard, ask very little of us in return. What they ask is that we provide the equipment they need to get the job done, provide for them, provide for their family. And the agreement we have before us today would do that. I thank the conferees for their efforts to craft this compromise.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may care to consume to the distinguished chairman of the Rules Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), who does so much to make sure that we operate in an orderly and expeditious fashion in this Congress.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this rule and the conference report. I want to begin by congratulating Mr. COLE and Ms. MATSUI for their management of this rule and to say that this is a great example of bipartisanship.

Our friends DUNCAN HUNTER and IKE SKELTON have worked very closely on this bill, which is, if I recall, \$562.8 billion. It includes that \$70 billion bridge fund, a 2.2 percent increase which is part of a 40 percent increase over the past 8 years that has been provided for our men and women in uniform. It is a very important thing as we continue to fight this ongoing struggle against terrorism that we are dealing with all over the world.

Only the United States of America can provide the kind of leadership that is being provided today. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is absolutely essential that this Department of Defense authorization bill continue to set the example of bipartisanship in our quest to win that war against terrorism.

The reason that I wanted to take a few minutes here, Mr. Speaker, is that I wanted to underscore the fact that our reforms are working.

Now, why would I be talking about the issue of reform as we bring up the Department of Defense conference re-

port's rule? It is the fact that this is the first time in a conference report that we have actually had a required listing of the so-called earmarks, items that were not included in either the House-passed authorization bill or the Senate-passed authorization bill. We use this term "air dropped."

There are five particular provisions, Mr. Speaker, that have been listed. This list is now made available, and the American people, our colleagues and the American people through the media, and obviously this is online, can see exactly what items were provided. And it enjoyed bipartisan support this reform. We had Democrats, whom I am happy to say joined with us in our quest to reform. Very few, but we had some Democrats joined with us in our quest to ensure that we could have greater transparency, disclosure, and accountability so that the American people will be able to see on these very important items that relate to our Nation's defense capability. They now don't have those hidden; they are in fact open for everyone to see, and that is a reform led by Speaker HASTERT that we have been able to implement. And I want to thank Speaker HASTERT and Majority Leader BOEHNER for, as we were going into the August break, making a commitment.

The three of us introduced the legislation that called for this rule change, and we were able to implement it expeditiously; and it is now in effect, and this conference report is the first time that we have seen it.

So I just want to join in extending congratulations again to Messrs. HUNTER and SKELTON and all of those who have been involved in this process and to say that we look forward to the passage of this rule, of course, and passage of the legislation.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my good friend, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule and to the underlying bill. And I do so because of a ridiculous earmark, despite what the Rules Chairman has just stated, which was added by Chairman HUNTER in order to keep the public out of a national park, which happens to be in my district, the Channel Islands National Park.

This provision monkeys around with a court settlement to end a lucrative privately run trophy hunting operation on Santa Rosa Island.

The owners of the elk and deer herds, the Vail family, were already paid \$30 million by taxpayers when they deeded over the island back in 1986. They were supposed to end this hunting operation in 2011. A trophy hunt, which, by the way, costs hunters up to \$17,000 per weekend, shuts the island to park visitors for 5 months out of each year. Mr. HUNTER is seeking to allow private hunting in the park to go on indefinitely, and this will result in more lawsuits.

One might wonder why this provision is in a bill which deals with supporting

our troops. The proposals and reasons behind it have evolved over time. At one point it was to establish a hunting preserve for the military's top brass and their guests. When that didn't fly, it was quickly changed to making Santa Rosa a place for disabled vets to hunt. But when the paralyzed veterans of America actually went to the island, they told Chairman HUNTER, and I quote, "the Santa Rosa initiatives is not viable."

Then the provision morphed into saving the animals from extinction. That is right. The intention is that we are going to save the animals, though they continue to be hunted indefinitely and on the island. This provision is opposed by the Park Service, the PVA, the Humane Society, and many public lands groups. Even the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution against this proposal.

So why is it in the bill? Who knows. What we do know is that taxpayers who paid \$30 million for the island are now being told by our chairman they can't visit it for nearly half the year. This is an insult to our constituents, to all taxpayers. It is also an insult to our troops whose service to this country is being used as a cover for this special interest boondoggle.

Now, I know the underlying bill will pass by a wide margin, and I understand that. I also know that this House has never endorsed this proposal. And given the opportunity for an up-or-down vote, I am sure they would agree with me. And so this is yet another sad day for taxpayers, for our national parks, and for this House.

PVA,
July 26, 2006.

Hon. VIC SNYDER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE SNYDER: On behalf of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), I am responding to your inquiry regarding efforts to provide hunting opportunities for paralyzed and disabled veterans on Santa Rosa Island. While PVA applauds the efforts by Chairman Duncan Hunter to open hunting and outdoor venues for our members, other disabled veterans and current service members we have come to the conclusion that the Santa Rosa Island initiative is not viable. PVA has sent one of our members to the island and we have explored possible solutions to the challenges posed by the site; however, it is our opinion that the numerous obstacles inherent to the island, including ingress and egress, logistics, personal safety and cost, far outweigh the possible, limited benefit it could provide.

It is our hope that the concept of expanded hunting and outdoor opportunities on federal facilities for our members, other disabled veterans and service personnel will continue to receive the attention of Congress. Chairman Hunter's efforts should serve as a starting point for future initiatives to provide accessible venues for both veterans and active duty personnel. We would be happy to work with you and other members to explore alternatives to this issue and identify other opportunities across the country that may afford veterans expanded options.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS K. VOLLMER,
Associate Executive Director
for Government Relations.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, DC, July 21, 2006.

Hon. DUNCAN HUNTER,
Chairman, Armed Services Committee,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Department of the Interior would like the opportunity to provide its views on section 1036(c) of H.R. 5122, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, as approved by the House of Representatives.

We recommend deletion of section 1036(c) in order to ensure that the National Park Service is able to continue its progress toward the recovery of native species and providing year-round access for other recreational activities on Santa Rosa Island.

Section 1036(c) states that "[t]he Secretary of the Interior shall immediately cease the plan, approved in the settlement agreement for case number 96-7412 WJR and case number 97-4098 WJR, to exterminate the deer and elk on Santa Rosa Island, Channel Islands, California, by helicopter and shall not exterminate or nearly exterminate the deer and elk."

We believe section 1036(c) is intended to overturn this settlement agreement that prescribes a phase-out of the privately-owned deer and elk from Santa Rosa Island, culminating in their complete removal by the owners by December 31, 2011. The National Park Service is party to that settlement agreement and stands by its terms. Fulfillment of the agreement is necessary to accomplish the purposes for which the National Park Service acquired Santa Rosa Island.

The National Park Service purchased Santa Rosa Island for \$30 million in taxpayer funds in 1986 after Congress included the 54,000-acre island as part of Channel Islands National Park in 1980. The purpose of this acquisition was to restore the native ecology of the island and open it to the public for hiking, camping, sightseeing, and other recreational activities. Although hunting is usually not allowed in National Parks, a private hunting operation for deer and elk was permitted to continue under a special use permit at the request of the owner, who had retained a 25-year reservation of use and occupancy (through 2011) in 7.6 acres on the island. Subsequently, the settlement agreement provided for the phased elimination of the deer and elk population.

Elimination of the nonnative deer and elk is needed to allow native plant and animal species, including some that are endangered and threatened, to flourish on the island. Also, more visitors will be able to enjoy the island after the closure of the deer and elk hunting operations that currently close about 90 percent of the island to National Park Service visitors engaged in other recreational activities for 4 to 5 months every year.

Section 1036(c) also raises several other issues. It gives direction to the Secretary of the Interior with respect to the settlement agreement, yet the Secretary is not responsible for removing the deer and elk from the island—the former owner of the island, who retains ownership of the deer and elk, is responsible for their removal. Furthermore, 1036(c) suggests that the National Park Service has an approved plan to exterminate the deer and elk by helicopter, yet no such plan exists. In fact, as already noted, the deer and elk are the property of the former owner of the island and, under the terms of the settlement agreement, must be removed by them. Only if the deer and elk become extraordinarily difficult to remove would the National Park Service share the cost of removing the animals, which could include the use of helicopters.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. The Office of Management and Budget has advised that it has no objection to this letter from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

THE HUMANE SOCIETY,
August 7, 2006.

Hon. JOHN WARNER,
Chairman, Armed Services Committee,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. CARL LEVIN,
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WARNER & SENATOR LEVIN: On behalf of the more than 9.5 million members and constituents of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest animal protection organization, I urge you to reject efforts by House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter to establish a hunting reserve on Santa Rosa Island in California.

The HSUS urges you to follow the guidance provided by S. Res. 468, the Senate resolution that deemed that the Channel Islands should be managed in a manner consistent with the mission of the National Park Service. This would preclude establishing a hunting operation on the Channel Islands, as advocated by Chairman Hunter.

Chairman Hunter's proposal to keep Santa Rosa Island open to guided trophy hunts of deer and elk under the guise of a benefit to disabled veterans is not only inhumane and unsporting, but is also opposed by the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the local community. It is also opposed by Representative Lois Capps, whose district includes the Channel Islands. Trophy hunting on this island is not viable for disabled veterans, and is not consistent with the wishes or the mandate of the National Park Service.

Although a large island, the deer and elk managed for trophy shooting have no opportunity to escape their pursuers. It is effectively a "canned" hunt. Conservation groups, hunters and animal protection organizations have openly agreed in their opposition to canned hunts. Canned hunts are commercial enterprises conducted under circumstances that generally guarantee a kill. Canned hunts can all be identified by the two traits they have in common: (1) they charge their clients a fee to kill an animal; and (2) they violate the generally accepted standards of the hunting community, which are based on the concept of fair chase, by eliminating escape possibilities. Our national park land should be safe havens for animals, not privileged playgrounds for a small group of trophy hunters.

We hope you will omit Rep. Hunter's language to establish a canned hunting operation on a unit of the National Park Service in the final version of the FY07 National Defense Authorization Act.

Sincerely,

WAYNE PACELLE,
President & CEO.

NATIONAL PARKS
CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, September 8, 2006.

Hon. JOHN W. WARNER,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
U.S. Senate.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the 327,000 members of the National Parks Conservation Association, I am writing to express our strong opposition to Section 1036(c) of the House-passed National Defense Authorization Act, which attempts to nullify a court-approved settlement agreement in a lawsuit regarding the management of the

Channel Islands National Park. I urge you not to include this harmful provision in the conference report on the DOD bill.

Under the terms of the Settlement Agreement in this proceeding (NPCA v. Kennedy, Civil Action Number 96-7412 WJR) non-native deer and elk are to be removed from the Park's Santa Rosa Island, and the lucrative private hunting operations on the island, which undermine restoration efforts and limit public access to the park, are ended by the year 2011. The onerous language in the House bill attempts to alter that agreement by forestalling removal of the animals.

The ostensible purpose of the language is to create a hunting preserve for among others, disabled veterans, but the Paralyzed Veterans Association has stated unequivocally that Santa Rosa Island is not suitable for that purpose because of its rugged terrain, accessibility, and cost. This altogether worthy idea is in fact addressed in another section of the bill [Section 1036(a)(b)] which would provide increased hunting and fishing opportunities for disabled veterans and other armed service personnel at many existing, suitable DOD owned locations throughout the country.

On August 6th of this year, the Senate passed S. Res. 488, supporting the continued administration of the Channel Islands National Park, including Santa Rosa Island, in accordance with the laws, regulations, and policies of the National Park Service. The Congressional mandated purpose of the park is, "to protect and interpret the internationally significant natural, scenic, wildlife, marine, ecological, historic, archeological, cultural and scientific values of the Channel Islands." The Senate is, therefore, clearly on record in strong support of restoring, managing, and providing public access to all the Channel Islands as required by the terms of the court directed Settlement Agreement.

The National Park Service is strongly opposed to this provision, the Department of the Interior has recommended deleting the provision from the bill, and the Department of Defense has never requested it. This unrelated and non-jurisdictional controversy has no place in an important defense authorization bill. If Section 1036(c) is enacted, as a party to the court's Settlement Agreement, we will have no choice but to pursue every legal means available to preserve the settlement's integrity. I hope that will not be necessary and that you will drop this ill-conceived, unwarranted and damaging provision from the final Defense Bill.

Sincerely,

THOMAS C. KIERNAN,
President, National Parks
Conservation Association.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may care to consume to the distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. HUNTER, from California.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. And the only reason I am rising is to set straight the record which, sadly, has been not accurate that has just been laid out by my colleague, the gentlewoman from California.

I was taking a bunch of marines who were up hunting up in northern California down the California coastline, and one of them brought up the point that Santa Rosa Island off the coast, which is owned by a private company and which has deer and elk on it, was going to see those deer and elk exterminated, and wouldn't it be a great place for our wounded people re-

turning from Iraq and Afghanistan, rather than exterminating these animals with helicopters in the end, which is in the court order, to allow our people who like to pursue hunting in the Armed Forces who have been wounded to have a place to go and have a great time with their families.

□ 1615

Taking that under advisement, I put a provision in to allow that to happen. I have never put in a provision that was intended to have the Navy brass or VIPs or Army brass or Marine Corps brass out there hunting. This is for wounded people, and right now it is operated by a private company.

The ranching family, whom I have never met, I will tell the gentlewoman I have never met them. I have never had discussions with them, except one of them called up and asked me to tell the Park Service that I have never met him because my name was an anathematism. We say simply, listen, the island is going to be turned over by the private family to the Park Service in 2011. The court orders that all the animals be wiped out, be exterminated, be killed; the entire herd be killed. All we say is, don't exterminate the animals. Don't shoot them from helicopters, as the court order now directs. Let the herd stay and let us let our disabled veterans hunt.

Now we had the Paralyzed Veterans go over and check out the island. They wrote a letter back saying this is not their cup of tea. It is pretty rough terrain. It is hard to get over to the island. That is why almost nobody from the public comes over. The number of people who visit this 50,000-acre island per day, it is extremely small. There are almost more Park Service people on the island than there are members of the public. And this would only be for a short time during the year.

All we are asking is that they don't shoot the animals, don't exterminate them, and they let the disabled veterans hunt.

Now after the Paralyzed Veterans said this is not our cup of tea, because of the spartan circumstances over there, it is going to be tough for people with spinal cord injuries to really enjoy this island, so the Wound Warriors went over.

That is a great organization that takes wounded GIs and Marines and Navy and Air Force personnel, takes them skiing, takes them on outdoor outings and shows them a good time. They went to the island, and the report I got back, and I will give the letter to the gentlewoman, said they really enjoyed it. They really liked it, and they would like to have this opportunity. All we say is, don't exterminate the herd. That is the real import of this bill.

What I would like to see is a situation in which those people, only those people, only disabled American veterans get to hunt there. Because it is a wonderful outing. They can take their

families. Their families can visit the seashore. They can take pictures. They can have a wonderful outdoor time while these people who gave so much to our country have a special place to go.

They don't have to pay any money because this will be when it is turned over to the government by the ranch family. All we are saying to the ranch family is, when you turn it over, don't exterminate the deer and elk. Leave them for the veterans. That is all they have to do. Inaction is what we are asking for.

I would tell the gentlewoman she has my word I will never hunt on that island. The only thing I will do is help the wounded veterans get over and help them in any way to have a good time. I think this is absolutely appropriate. It is not going to push a single member of the public off that island. Almost nobody goes to it right now because it takes a boat ride or plane ride to get to that island. This will bring happiness to many, many military families. I think it is appropriate that we do this.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the time when maybe the gentlewoman and I could go over with some of our wounded guys and watch them having a good time over there and agree that this is a good thing.

I thank the gentleman for letting me speak.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) to respond.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, just in response, because I am happy to accompany the chairman any time he wishes to go to the island. I have been there. There have been many thousands of visitors this year. Yes, it is a rugged place. That is one of the appeals of it. Much of the natural resource that is there, cultural and animal and flora, that have been destroyed in part by first the cattle, now the cattle are gone, and by the deer and elk, it is a prized area for archaeologists and others to understand the history of the geography of our country. That is one of the reasons to remove the elk.

Extirpation has been ameliorated by the Park Service's interest, and an invitation has already been extended to offer support to the family in removing without injuring the animals at the appropriate time after the settlement has been arranged.

It is also the case that the park superintendent is looking forward to an opportunity to make this island more accessible to those with disabilities. Veterans are not excluded from the island, nor would they ever be.

Also, hunting has been especially provided for our veterans on all kinds of public lands, including many military bases, as I am sure the chairman already knows. That is why the Paralyzed Veterans said there are many other places we can hunt, and now they would be extended an opportunity with special accommodations to visit the island like the rest of the public has.

There have been many attempts on the part of the Park Service, and this

will continue, to reach out to people with special needs to make available the wonderful resources on the island.

I am happy to take the chairman up on his invitation to visit the island.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER).

Mr. HUNTER. That island is over 50 square miles. Can the gentlewoman tell me how many people from the public visit the island per day on a given day?

I yield to the gentlewoman.

Mrs. CAPPS. I don't have those numbers, but I can certainly make them available to you. Even with it being off limits to the public 5 months of the year, it is either 5,000 or 8,000 visitors that were out there last year. Part of the attraction of the island is its remoteness and the fact that it is set apart.

Mr. HUNTER. Reclaiming my time, if there are 5,000 people per year, that means roughly 20 people per day on that entire island. That's 5,000 people. With 365 days a year, 10 people a day, so 3,000 people and if you double that, 20 people a day for 50-square miles. That means there is one visitor from the public per 2 square miles on that island per day.

Now we have many, many places in America where we have mixed use, where you have hunters and fishermen and members of the public. These disabled veterans, they are not going to push anybody off the island. If you compare that to our other parks like Yosemite, with thousands of people coming per day, 10 or 20 people per day on a 50-square mile is no density whatsoever.

In fact, I bet you that the park employees, the U.S. Government employees, on many days outnumber, because there are more than 20 of them at any time on the island, I bet you they outnumber the number of visitors.

I will tell the gentlewoman, because you have to take a boat trip or an airplane to get to that park, you will never have the type of visitors you get in parks where people can drive up. So that makes it perfect for these wounded people, these great American veterans, to come on over and have a great outdoor experience.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, the rule before us makes in order a balanced agreement on the fiscal year 2007 Defense authorization bill. I urge all Members to support its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Today, in closing, I want to reiterate the importance of passing this rule. This rule allows us to move forward and pass necessary legislation and do the business of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I particularly again want to thank the distinguished chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from California

(Mr. HUNTER), and also the ranking member, the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON). They have worked together on this legislation and presented us with a truly model bill and one I think they adjusted during the legislative process to meet the needs of American men and women who are serving under very difficult circumstances to protect this country.

I particularly appreciate the fact that they made sure that these deserving individuals got a pay raise, that they made sure that the people who defended the country in the past were not subjected to unnecessary fee increases in the Tricare system, and they worked hard to shift funds towards force protection and the protection of individual American soldiers. And, at the same time, they addressed the very, very serious and critical needs of the Army and Marine Corps in terms of additional personnel and additional equipment.

I think the chairman and the ranking member can be exceptionally proud of their efforts, and I think all of us can appreciate the bipartisan spirit that the members of the House Armed Services Committee acted in, and I am sure when we vote later today we will have a strong vote in support of the legislation.

Obviously, it comes as no surprise that I intend to vote for the rule and the underlying legislation. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY) laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 29, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Capitol Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I hereby resign as the representative of the 16th Congressional District of Florida, effective today.

Sincerely,

MARK FOLEY,
Member of Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 29, 2006.

Hon. JEB BUSH,
Governor, State of Florida,
Tallahassee, FL.

DEAR GOVERNOR BUSH: I hereby resign as the representative of the 16th Congressional District of Florida, effective today.

Sincerely,

MARK FOLEY,
Member of Congress.

JOHN WARNER NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1062, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 5122) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1062, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of today.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me start out by saying this is a tough job for a lot of our members of the committee and the subcommittees that make up the Armed Services Committee. It involves a lot of travel to the warfighting theaters. Almost every member on our committee has gone multiple times to Iraq and Afghanistan. It involves a lot of time away from families and a lot of tough work in committees. It involves a lot of analyses to try to figure out how to manage the logistical problems of all of the problems that attend the war fight in two theaters, Iraq and Afghanistan, and the war against terror around the world, and at the same time look over that horizon and try to exercise some vision as to what the next conflict may be and what we have to do to prepare for the future.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, I could have no better partner in that endeavor than the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON).

□ 1630

Mr. SKELTON is a tremendous, tremendous guy. And he has got kind of a corporate memory in terms of military history. He has got a recommended reading list for all of us. He analyzes the present situation through the prism of history. We all appreciate that. And today we actually dressed in uniform. That is amazing. And without design, I might say. We simply came in with the same outfits because this is